

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00521 141420 Z

47

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 M-03 A-01 SCA-01 INR-09 PER-05 OC-06

CCO-00 CIAE-00 EB-11 CU-04 USIA-12 SS-14 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3994

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0521

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: OGEN, PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: REOPENING OF AMERICAN CONSULATE IN BRATISLAVA

1. SUMMARY. AS WE TURN OUR FOCUS TOWARD EUROPE AND AT TIME WHEN CZECHS HAVE SIGNALLED OPENING OF SIGNIFICANT NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN COMMERCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS, WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH RE- ESTABLISHMENT OF AMERICAN CONSULATE IN BRATISLAVA, WHICH HAS STOOD SYMBOLICALLY EMPTY SINCE 1950. CONCRETE US OBJECTIVES WHICH WOULD BE SERVED OUT OF BRATISLAVA CONSULATE INCLUDE FULLER EXPLOITATION OF COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES IN REGION OF BURGEONING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, DOUBLING OF AMERICAN BASE FOR INFORMATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND CONTACTS, MARKEDLY INCREASING QUALITY OF CONSULAR SERVICES ON BEHALF OF BOTH CZECHOSLOVAK AND AMERICAN CITIZENS, AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SLOVAKIA. IMPORTANCE OF ALL THIS IS ENHANCED BY FACT THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS FEDERAL STATE IN WHICH CZECH- SLOVAK DIVISION IS IMPORTANT REALITY OF BOTH HISTORY AND CURRENT POLITICAL LIFE AND STRUCTURE. BRATISLAVA, AS CAPITAL OF SLOVAKIA AND SEAT OF SLOVAK GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNIST PARTY, THUS HAS SIGNIFICE BEYOND SIZE AND NOMINAL PLACE IN COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRAGUE 00521 141420 Z

2. IN ECONOMIC SPHERE, SLOVAKIA HOLDS FAVORED PLACE IN NATIONAL PLANNING, WHICH ACCORDS IT HIGH RATE OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX CENTERED ON BRATISLAVA. WITH CZECH PLANNING TO SHIFT IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL PURCHASES TOWARD U. S., CULTIVATION OF THIS MARKET FOR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY OFFERS UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVED COMMERCIAL TIES.

3. DEVELOPING OUT OF HISTORY OF EMIGRATION FROM SLOVAKIA TO US, EMBASSY'S CONSULAR WORKLOAD IS HEAVILY INVOLVED WITH THIS PART OF COUNTRY. ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF VISA APPLICANTS COME TO PRAGUE FROM SLOVAKIA. 95 PERCENT OF RECIPIENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER FEDERAL PAYMENTS ARE IN SLOVAKIA. LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICAN VISITORS BYPASS PRAGUE ENROUTE TO STAYS WITH RELATIVES IN SLOVAKIA, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO COME AS TOURISTS TO BRATISLAVA DIRECTLY FROM NEARBY VIENNA. ALL THE CONSULAR FUNCTIONS INVOLVED COULD BEST BE PERFORMED FROM BRATISLAVA.

4. WE WOULD EXPECT THE REOPENED CONSULATE TO INCLUDE CULTURAL CENTER FACILITIES LARGELY ANALOGOUS TO THOSE IN EMBASSY. QUITE APART FROM VALUE OF DIRECT LIBRARY, FILM, PUBLICATION AND OTHER DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES, PRESENCE OF PRESS AND CULTURAL OFFICER CREATES POSSIBILITIES FOR CONTACTS AND PROGRAMS WHICH PROUD SLOVAKS WILL WELCOME AS DIRECTLY DEVOTED TO THEM, AND NOT OPERATED FROM DISTANT CZECH CAPITAL. INCIDENTALLY, SINCE RPO VIENNA PROVIDES MAJOR SUPPORT FOR P&C OPERATION, EASY (45 MINUTES BY ROAD) CONTACT WITH BRATISLAVA WILL BENEFIT BOTH CONSULATE AND THIS EMBASSY.

5. VALUE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL CONTACTS AND OBSERVATION NEED NOT BE ELABORATED. WE SHOULD NOT IGNORE, HOWEVER, CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF FACT OF FEDERAL STATE AND DEEP FEELINGS OF SLOVAK NATIONALISM WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED IN RESTORED US PRESENCE IN SLOVAK CAPITAL. WE HAVE HAD AMPLE OCCASION TO EXPERIENCE THE VIGOR OF SLOVAK INTEREST IN SUCH PRESENCE. THIS WOULD MARKEDLY ENHANCE SUCCESS OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES (WE HAVE HAD FORETASTE WITH RECEPTION OF TRADE MISSIONS)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRAGUE 00521 141420 Z

AND-- AS NOTED IN PARA 4-- CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL

ACTIVITIES, QUITE BEYOND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENT OFFICERS FOR CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS AND OTHER PUBLIC FIGURES.

6. WHILE DEPT WILL HAVE VIEWS ON POST ADMINISTRATION, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE SIMPLIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, WITH EMBASSY PROVIDING MAJOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WITH ITS EXISTING STAFF.

7. WE WOULD FORESEE SMALL STAFF, BEGINNING WITH (1) TWO OFFICERS (CONSUL AND P&C OFFICER) WITH POSSIBLE LATER ASSIGNMENT OF COMMERCIAL OFFICER IF JUSTIFIED; (2) AMERICAN ASSISTANT, AND (3) SEVERAL FSL'S, ONE OR TWO EACH FOR CONSULAR, P&C, COMMERCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE WORK).

8. EXISTENCE OF US GOVERNMENT-OWNED BUILDING OFFERS US POSSIBILITY TO MOVE AS QUICKLY AS FUNDING AND TRAINING OF PERSONNEL ALLOW. WITH CONSULAR CONVENTION NOW BEING NEGOTIATED (IN CONNECTION WITH WHICH CZECHS HAVE ALREADY INVITED US TO REOPEN BRATISLAVA) PRESENT TIME OFFERS EXTRAORDINARY POSSIBILITY TO PURSUE US OBJECTIVES HERE.
SHERER

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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